The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An operator control device for controlling an endoscope, the endoscope having an endoscope shaft, the operator control device comprising:

one or more controls for controlling the endoscope; and

an engaging component having a disengaged mode and engaged mode, wherein in the disengaged mode the engaging component allows the endoscope shaft and operator control device to rotate independently of one another, and in the engaged mode, the engaging component causes the endoscope shaft and the operator control device to rotate together.

2. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component has a detachment mode which allows the operator control device to be detached from the endoscope shaft for cleaning and reuse.

3. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component may be manually switched between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

4. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component may be remotely switched between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

5. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component directly engages the endoscope shaft.

6. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component engages a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

7. The device of Claim 6, wherein the fixed feature is a break-out box.

8. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component comprises a collar.

9. The device of Claim 8, wherein the collar is a rotating locking collar that is attached to the proximal end of a break-out box on the endoscope shaft.

10. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component comprises a caliper style set of pads which are in an opened position in the disengaged mode and are in a closed position in the engaged mode.

11. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component comprises a "C" style clamping device which is moved away from contact with the endoscope shaft in the disengaged mode and is moved into contact with the endoscope shaft in the engaged mode.

12. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component comprises one-half of a clutch wherein the other half of the clutch is built into a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

13. The device of Claim 1, wherein the engaging component comprises a pressure pad that is mounted to a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

14. A method for orienting an operator control device relative to an endoscope shaft, the method comprising:

disengaging the operator control device from the endoscope shaft;

rotating the endoscope shaft and operator control device relative to one another until a desired position is reached; and

re-engaging the operator control device to the endoscope shaft.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the operator control device is directly engaged to the endoscope shaft.

16. The method of Claim 14, wherein the operator control device is engaged to the endoscope shaft through a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the fixed feature is a break-out box.

18. An endoscope system, comprising;

an endoscope with an endoscope shaft; and

a control device that can be engaged and disengaged from the endoscope shaft, the control device comprising one or more controls for controlling the endoscope.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the control device can be directly engaged to the endoscope shaft.

20. The system of Claim 18, wherein the control device is engaged to the endoscope shaft through a fixed component on the endoscope shaft.